

installed as separate units. When physically separated, the housing and recessed lighting fixture may or may not be later attached during installation.

It should be understood that although the use of a housing that is separate from the recessed lighting fixture can provide many benefits, it is typically preferred that the fire assembly be formed as an integral unit.

Referring to Figure 1, for instance, a housing of the present invention can include four side walls 30, 32, 34, and 36. Each of the four side walls can be formed into a cube-shaped fire box by attaching a top and/or bottom wall thereto. Although the housing is depicted and described herein as having a cube shape (e.g. box), it should be understood that a housing of the present invention can also have any other shape or dimension, and contain any number of walls, so long as the housing extends from the ceiling to form a substantially continuous surface therewith. For example, in an alternative embodiment, the housing can have a cylindrical shape.

As shown in Figure 2, a top wall 33 can be placed above light fixture 20 and attached to the side walls by any method known in the art. Moreover, a bottom wall 38 can be placed under light fixture 20 and further attached to the side walls by any method known in the art. As illustrated, bottom wall 38 can define a circular opening corresponding to the cylindrical reflector of the light fixture so that light fixture 20 can distribute light therethrough. In some embodiments, as shown in Figures 1-3, a decorative flange 48 (148 in Fig. 3) can also be inserted into

the opening of bottom wall 38 (138) in Fig. 3) to attach to light fixture 20 (120 in Fig. 3) and improve the aesthetics of the fire assembly.

In general, the housing walls of the present invention can be made from any of a variety of materials. Examples of generally fire-resistant materials include, but are not limited to, dry wall or wallboard (e.g. sheet rock, plywood, asbestos cement sheets, gypsum plasterboard, laminated plastics, etc.), and plaster. In particular, a housing wall of the present invention typically comprises at least one material that is generally fire-resistant, although the wall may also contain other materials that are not fire-resistant. For instance, in one embodiment, as shown in Figure 1, side walls 30, 32, 34, 36; bottom wall 38; and the top wall (not shown), can comprise a dry wall or wallboard material. However, it should be understood that the fire box walls need not comprise the same material.

In some embodiments, one or more walls of the housing can also comprise multiple layers of material. In general, each layer of a multi-layered wall can comprise any of a variety of fire-resistant and/or non-fire-resistant materials. For instance, referring to Figure 2, one embodiment of the present invention includes a fire box having walls made from two layers of dry wall. As shown, side wall outer layers 30b, 32b, 34b, and 36b can be attached to dry wall, side wall inner layers 30a, 32a, 34a, and 36a (not shown), respectively. In this embodiment, the inner layers of material have smaller dimensions than the outer layers attached thereto. Although not required, such smaller